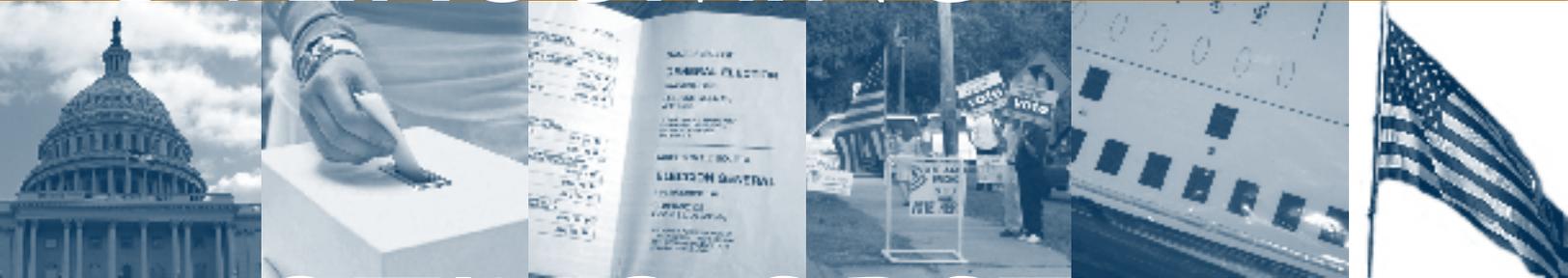


OVERCOMING



VOTING OBSTACLES

A resource from the National Center for Transgender Equality
September 2010



1325 Massachusetts Avenue NW, Suite 700, Washington, DC 20005
(202) 903-0112 • ncte@transequality.org • www.TransEquality.org

TRANSGENDER PEOPLE CAN VOTE.

DO NOT LET ANYONE REFUSE YOUR RIGHT TO VOTE.

September 2010



Everyone should vote! Unfortunately there are issues that sometimes make it difficult for trans people to vote. Don't let these barriers stop you from voting—you have a right to vote. Trans people may find voting to be an intimidating process for many reasons. Below are trans-specific reasons; on the following pages are other situations that may arise for some transgender people.

IF YOUR NAME DOESN'T MATCH YOUR ID

You may have obtained ID with a new name that does not match the name listed on the voter rolls. Transgender voters should change their names on the voter registration rolls to their new name as soon as possible. Contact your local Registrar of Voters. Even if your name doesn't match, you should still be allowed to vote. Bring the ID necessary to show that you are the person who is registered to vote. Some possibilities include old ID cards, court orders, or physician letters.

IF YOUR PICTURE DOESN'T MATCH YOUR APPEARANCE

The picture (or name) displayed on your ID may no longer match your gender expression. If so, it is important for you to carry whatever identification or documentation is necessary to prove that you are the person registered to vote under that name. Some possibilities might include old ID cards, any court orders or physician letters you may have.

IF YOU HAVE MULTIPLE ID WITH CONFLICTING INFORMATION

While we do suggest that you bring enough ID to prove that you are the person who is registered to vote, it is not appropriate for poll workers to ask for more than that. Avoid problems by not showing conflicting ID's whenever possible. In many places, they may only ask for ID from first-time voters. If you encounter a problem, ask for a provisional ballot and call 1-866-OUR-VOTE.

IF YOU ENCOUNTER TRANSPHOBIA/DISCRIMINATION

Fear of transphobia or discrimination can also play a roll in keeping trans people from voting. Many states offer early voting or absentee balloting; these methods of voting may make some transgender people more comfortable. You can find information by contacting the Secretary of State in your state. You might also think about bringing a voting buddy when you go to the polls.

IF YOU ARE TOLD YOU CANNOT VOTE FOR ANY REASON, INSIST ON A PROVISIONAL BALLOT AND IMMEDIATELY CONTACT THE ELECTION PROTECTION COALITION AT 1-866-OUR-VOTE.



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VOTER RESOURCES

You can find comprehensive voting information, including registration forms and polling locations, on these two sites:

- [Vote411.org](http://www.vote411.org), a project of the League of Women Voters; you can register to vote, find polling places and get information about elections in your state, www.vote411.org
- canIvote.org, a website run by state election officials, which has information about registration, what ID you need, how to become a poll worker, etc.,

RACIAL/ETHNIC DISCRIMINATION

Despite the protections granted by the Voting Rights Act of 1965, the disenfranchisement of voters through discrimination based on race and ethnicity of color has continued to be a problem for our nation. More info on overcoming barriers:

- American Civil Liberties Union Voting Rights, <http://www.aclu.org/voting-rights/minority-voting-rights>
- “The New Face of Jim Crow: Voter Suppression in America”; a joint effort of People for the American Way and NAACP and provides information on race-based voter discrimination, available at <http://www.pfaw.org/media-center/publications/the-new-face-of-jim-crow-voter-suppression-america>

COLLEGE STUDENT VOTERS

Student voters may face challenges in both their home states and where they attend university. The rights of students to vote varies from state to state, but all students 18 years old or older have a right to vote.

- Rock the Vote, Student Voter Information Guide, <http://www.rockthevote.com/election-center/voting-as-a-student/>
- United States Student Association. <http://www.usstudents.org>, (202) 347-8772
- Student Voting Rights, Brennan Center for Justice, New York University School of Law: <http://www.brennancenter.org/studentvoting>

FELONY CONVICTION

People who have been convicted of a felony may believe they can no longer vote. This may be true in some states, but not all.

- The Lawyers’ Committee for Civil Rights Under Law provides information on the re-enfranchisement process for all 50 states <http://www.lawyerscomm.org> and (202) 662-8600
- ACLU Voting Rights Project for ex-offenders: <http://www.aclu.org/voting-rights/ex-offenders>

HOMELESSNESS

Homeless people with no physical address can still register and vote.

- The National Coalition for the Homeless, “You Don’t Need a Home to Vote,” <http://www.nationalhomeless.org/projects/vote/index.html>

TRANSPORTATION ISSUES

If you need transportation to the polls on Election Day, contact the local chapter of your political party or your local Registrar of Voters.

LANGUAGE BARRIERS

Language barriers may cause some trans people not to vote because they cannot read the ballot. Some states and localities with large populations of under-represented people print ballots in more than one language. Voters may also bring a friend or family member into the voting booth to aid them in casting their ballot.

Resources:

- National Council of La Raza's ya es hora ¡VE Y VOTA!: <http://veyvota.yaeshora.info> or call (202) 785-1670
- Vote411.org has voter registration information in Spanish, Chinese, Japanese, Koren, Tagalog, and Vietnamese, in addition to English.

DISABILITY ACCESS

Disabled people may have assistance to cast their votes. Voters may bring a friend or family member into the voting booth to aid in casting their ballot.

- American Association of People with Disabilities, Disability Vote Project: http://www.aapd.com/site/c.pvl1kNWJqE/b.5606967/k.63BD/Disability_Vote_Project.htm, (800) 840-8844

LOCATING YOUR POLLING PLACE

If you need assistance locating your polling place, the League of Women Voter's Vote411 site has a polling place locator <http://www.vote411.org>

ADDRESS CHANGE

It is a voter's responsibility to notify the local Registrar of Voters with any change of address status. Each state has its own laws governing change of address procedures—some states allow updates to address status as late as Election Day while others require prior notice. Your state's Office of the Secretary of State or your local Registrar of Voters can provide you with the requirements for reporting a change of address in your area. For assistance, go to the National Association of Secretaries of State: <http://www.canivote.org>

YOUR NAME IS MISSING FROM THE ROLLS

If you arrive on Election Day and are not on the voter rolls, you should request a PROVISIONAL BALLOT. Although states are required to create provisional ballots, poll workers may not readily offer them. Do not be afraid to ask for a provisional ballot—you are legally entitled to one. If you feel that you have been incorrectly removed from the voter rolls, contact your state's Office of the Secretary of State or your local Registrar of Voters. For more information on Provisional Ballots, go to the Pew Center's [electionline.org: http://www.pewcenteronthestates.org/uploadedFiles/bal-lot%20verification.pdf](http://www.pewcenteronthestates.org/uploadedFiles/bal-lot%20verification.pdf)

**TO REPORT DISCRIMINATION, CALL 1-866-OUR-VOTE (687-8683) IMMEDIATELY.
THE ELECTION PROTECTION COALITION WILL HAVE ATTORNEYS READY TO HELP YOU VOTE.**

YOUR VOTE MATTERS!